

## Message Text

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FOR SCHAUFLE FROM WISNER

DEPT PASS LONDON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: PATRIOTIC FRONT'S RESPONSE TO  
THE CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT ON A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE

AT THE NOVEMBER 16 PLENARY SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE,  
ROBERT MUGABE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WHICH HE  
AND JOSHUA NKOMO SIGNED. THE STATEMENT HAS NOT BEEN  
CIRCULATED IN PUBLIC ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THAT  
NKOMO AND MUGABE ARE MEETING WITH THE PRESS NOW.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT CALLED FOR THIS PLENARY SESSION IN  
ORDER TO RESPOND TO THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN, MR.  
IVOR RICHARD, AT YESTERDAY'S SESSION. WE WERE NOT ABLE TO  
RESPOND TO IT IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE OUR REQUEST TO BE PROVIDED  
WITH A COPY OF THE STATEMENT BEFORE THE MEETING WAS REFUSED,  
ALTHOUGH OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES WERE GIVEN STATEMENTS OVER  
THE WEEKEND. IT WAS CONSIDERED IMPOLITIC TO GIVE ADVANCE  
COPIES OF THE STATEMENT TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT BUT NOT TO  
OTHERS. WE MUST REGISTER OUR STRONG PROTEST TO THE BRITISH  
GOVERNMENT FOR THE TACTICS ADOPTED AT THIS CONFERENCE AIMED  
AT ACCENTUATING DIVISIONS AMONG AFRICAN NATIONALIST DELEGATIONS

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AND AT NEGOTIATING OVER OUR HEADS THE THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY

AND THE DESTINY OF OUR PEOPLES.

2. WE HAVE READ THE CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT CAREFULLY AND FIND IT IMPRECISE AND EVASIVE ON THE CRUCIAL QUESTION OF FIXING A DEFINITE DATE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUR COUNTRY. WE HAD AGREED AT THE START OF THIS CONFERENCE THAT THE DATE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF ZIMBABWE WOULD HAVE TO BE FIXED BEFORE ANY OTHER ISSUES COULD BE DISCUSSED. THE CHAIRMAN HIMSELF SAID ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, THAT "THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS TO AGREE ON A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE". FURTHER, THE CHAIRMAN, SPEAKING AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE THIRD MEETING, STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF FIXING A TARGET DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE, AND THE NEED TO GRASP THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE. HE SAID, "IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO AGREE ON A DATE AND THEREBY ELIMINATE THE RISK OF SLIPPAGE. I AGAIN UNDERLINE THAT AGREEMENT ON A DATE IS A TASK OF URGENCY. I PROPOSE THEREFORE TO CONTINUE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS".

3. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, WITH ITS LEGAL TEAM, PRODUCED A DETAILED TIME-TABLE WHICH DEMONSTRATED BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT THAT THE NECESSARY PROCESSES COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN 9 MONTHS. ON THIS BASIS WE PROPOSED SEPTEMBER 1, 1977 AS THE INDEPENDENCE DATE. WE CONCEDED 3 MONTHS TO DECEMBER 1, 1977, IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE BRITAIN'S OBJECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS IGNORED BOTH THE EVIDENCE WE PRODUCED AND THE CONCESSIONS WE MADE FOR NO APPARENT REASON. BRITISH INTRANSIGENCE IS INEXPLICABLE AND THEREFORE RAISES OUR SUSPICIONS.

4. WE MUST STATE THAT WE REGARD THE FIXING OF A FIRM DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE AS A SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE BEFORE THIS CONFERENCE BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR CERTAINTY, AND CLARITY OF DIRECTION, AND THE DEFINITE COMMITMENT OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS JUSTIFIABLE FEAR OF ATTEMPTS BY REACTIONARY FORCES TO SEIZE POWER AGAIN ILLEGALLY; IF NO SPECIFIC DATE IS FIXED.

5. IT HAS BECOME OBVIOUS TO US THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT  
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HAS NO INTENTION TO TRANSFER POWER TO THE TRUE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE. WE SHOULD STRESS THAT OUR DIFFERENCES WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE NOT ONLY OVER DATES AND MONTHS OR OVER THE THREE MONTHS PERIOD BETWEEN DECEMBER 1, 1977 AND MARCH 1, 1978 AS REFLECTED IN OUR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS, BUT ALSO THE BASIC INTENTIONS AND MOTIVES. THIS IS DEMONSTRATED BY BRITAIN'S REFUSAL TO COMMIT ITSELF TO A DEFINITE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE.

6. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TOTALLY REJECTS THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AS REFLECTED IN THE CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT. OUR REJECTION FLOWS FROM THE NATURE OF THE BRITISH DOCUMENT ITSELF WHICH DOES NOT ALLOW US TO PROCEED INTO THE NEXT STAGE OF THE PRESENT DELIBERATIONS, BECAUSE IT IS IMPRECISE, UNCERTAIN, AND NOT PEGGED TO A FIRM DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. SUCH A DATE WOULD CONTROL THE PACE OF THE PRESENT DELIBERATIONS IN SETTING UP THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND THE PACE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE PROCESSES NECESSARY FOR THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION. THE IMPRECISION AND EQUIVOCATION IN THE BRITISH DOCUMENT LEAVES US IN A POSITION WHERE WE ARE UNABLE TO PLAN THE PROCESSES AND TIME-TABLE FOR ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE. FOR INSTANCE, THE DISCUSSIONS ON THE SETTING UP OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD DRAG ON AD-INFINITUM.

7. WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT THERE HAS TO BE A TIME LIMIT AS TO THE PERIOD NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. THERE HAS TO BE A DATE FIXED AS TO WHEN THE COMPUTATION OF THE TIME FOR THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD BEGIN. FINALLY, THERE HAS TO BE A DEFINITE AND CEILING DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

8. WE THEREFORE MAINTAIN OUR POSITION THAT THE 1ST DECEMBER 1977 MUST BE NAMED AS A DEFINITE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE. TO ENSURE THAT THIS DATE CANNOT BE SABOTAGED WE CALL ON THE CHAIRMAN TO FIX HERE AND NOW A DEADLINE FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THIS CONFERENCE. THIS DEADLINE SHOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

9. SINCE THE CHAIRMAN MADE HIS STATEMENT IN THE PLENARY SESSION YESTERDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER 1976, IT HAS COME TO THE NOTICE OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT THAT THE CHAIRMAN HAS AGAIN CIRCULATED YET SECRET

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ANOTHER DOCUMENT ENTITLED "THE SHAPE OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT", TO ALL DELEGATIONS AND INTERESTED PARTIES TO THIS CONFERENCE, BUT EXCLUDING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

THE PATRIOTIC FRONT REGARDS THE CONDUCT OF THE CHAIRMAN IN PERSISTENTLY EXCLUDING THEM FROM ACCESS TO CERTAIN INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE DELIBERATIONS OF THIS CONFERENCE AS RAISING A SERIOUS CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CHAIRMAN HIMSELF. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS THEREFORE COMPELLED TO ENTERTAIN SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE OVERALL BRITISH INTENTIONS IN RESPECT OF THIS CONFERENCE.

PRESENTED BY

ROBERT MUGABE

LEADER OF ZANU DELEGATION

JOSHUA NKOMO  
PRESIDENT OF THE ANC(Z)

END TEXT ABRAMS

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